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Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 CA-01 L-03 H-01 CIAE-00
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 6141

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM ELAB PINS KS
SUBJ: STATUS OF URBAN INDUSTRIAL MISSION AND PASTORS IN MYONG-CHIN AND CHO CHI-SONG

REF: SEOUL 5495

1. REFTEL REPORTED THE INDICTMENT OF REV. IN MYONG-CHON OF THE URBAN INDUSTRIAL MISSION (UIM) ON CHARGES OF VIOLATING THE COOPERATIVE CREDIT UNION LAW AND VIOLATION OF EM-9. THIS MESSAGE PROVIDES LATEST INFORMATION ON SITUATION OF REV. IN, HIS ASSOCIATE, REV. CHO CHI-SONG, AND THE UIM.

2. REV. CHO HAS ALSO BEEN INDICTED FOR VIOLATING THE COOPERATIVE CREDIT UNION LAW, BUT NOT FOR VIOLATING EM-9. REV. CHO HAS NOT BEEN DETAINED, AND CONTINUES TO CARRY ON HIS NORMAL DUTIES AT THE UIM. NO DATE HAS YET BEEN SET FOR THE TRIAL. BOTH DEFENDANTS HAVE LAWYERS OF HIGH REPUTATION FOR CAPABILITY AND WHO HAVE THE TRUST OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMUNITY.

3. REV. IN IS BEING HELD IN THE YONGDONGPO DETENTION CENTER. HE RECEIVES VISITS FROM HIS FAMILY WEEKLY AND IS ACCESSIBLE TO HIS DEFENSE ATTORNEY. REV. IN IS IN GOOD HEALTH. HOWEVER, HE HAD PREVIOUSLY SUFFERED FROM A SLIPPED DISC IN HIS BACK AND PAINS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS CONDITION CONTINUE TO BOTHER HIM WHILE IN PRISON. REPORTEDLY, SPECIAL PROVISION HAS
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BEEN MADE FOR HIM TO LIE DOWN DURING THE DAY TO EASE DISCOMFORT WHEN IT OCCURS.

4. THERE IS CONCERN IN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY HERE THAT CHARGES AGAINST IN AND CHO AND THE UIM COOPERATIVE MAY SIGNAL START OF CONCERTED CAMPAIGN BY ROKG TO CLOSE UIM OPERATIONS ENTIRELY. WE CANNOT RULE OUT THIS POSSIBILITY.

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HOWEVER, UIM ACTIVITIES CONTINUE AT HIGH PACE WITH ABOUT 5,000 MEMBERS ATTENDING PROGRAMS MONTHLY. WHILE REGISTERED UIM COOPERATIVE HAS BEEN ORDERED TO CLOSE, UIM HAS FORMED A NEW UNREGISTERED CREDIT COOPERATIVE, "THE SQUIRREL ASSOCIATION", AND IS TRANSFERRING THE CAPITAL OF THE OLD COOPERATIVE TO THE NEW ONE. ABOUT ONE HALF OF THE OLD COOPERATIVE'S ASSETS OF 50 MILLION WON HAVE BEEN TRANSFERRED SO FAR, AND THE ROKG HAS NOT ATTEMPTED TO BLOCK THIS TRANSFER. DEPENDING ON THE OUTCOME OF THE TRIAL OF IN AND CHO, THE UIM COULD BE FINED 1.3 MILLION WON FOR VIOLATING THE CREDIT UNION LAW, BUT THIS FINE WOULD BE WELL WITHIN THE UIM COOPERATIVE ABILITY TO PAY.

COMMENT: WHILE THE ROKG MAY BE SNAPPING AT THE UIM'S HEELS, IT DOES NOT APPEAR THAT THE AUTHORITIES HAVE DONE ANYTHING YET WHICH WOULD TERMINATE BASIC UIM ACTIVITIES, INDEED, PROGRAMS APPEAR TO BE GOING FORWARD AS USUAL EXCEPT FOR THE ABSENCE OF THE SERVICES OF REV. IN.
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